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REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Budgetary
Control

on the budgetary control aspects of the publishing,
printing and reprographic sector of the institutions
of the EC

Rapporteur: Mr E. KELLETT-BOWMAN

PE 88.088/fin.
Or. En.

By resolution of 14 October 1982, the Committee on Budgetary Control was authorized to draw up a report on the budgetary control aspects of the publishing, printing and reprographic sector of the institutions of the EC.

At its meeting of 2 November 1982, Mr Kellett-Bowman was appointed rapporteur.

The committee considered the draft report at its meeting of 24/25 January 1984 and adopted the motion for a resolution unanimously.

The following took part in the vote : Mr Aigner, chairman; Mrs Boserup and Mr Price, vice-chairmen; Mr Kellett-Bowman, rapporteur; Mr Irmer, Mr Mart, Mr Notenboom and Mr Konrad Schön.

This report was tabled on 26 January 1984.

The deadline for the tabling of amendments to this report appears in the draft agenda for the part-session at which it will be debated.

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The Committee on Budgetary Control hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement:

Motion for a Resolution

on the budgetary control aspects of the publishing, printing and reprographic sector of the institutions of the EC

The European Parliament

- A Recalling (i) its insistence that wasteful use of resources, of equipment and of personnel in the printing, publishing and reprographic sector of the institutions of the EC should be eliminated and (ii) its proposals in this regard put forward in the interim report¹;
- B Recognising that technological advance in the sphere of printing presents opportunities for increased efficiency;
- C Observing that some improvement in inter-institutional cooperation has taken place in this sector following Parliament's interim resolution;
- D Believing that it is necessary to keep a continuing watch on future developments so as to ensure that the appropriate new technology is put into practical and cost-beneficial application;
- E Having regard to the report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (Doc 1-1334/83),

Positive response

1. Welcomes the positive response of the institutions of the EC to Parliament's wish to have fuller inter-institutional cooperation in the sphere of printing, reproducing and publishing texts so that maximum economies may be secured in the use of personnel, equipment and Community funds;

Closer cooperation between the institutions

2. Notes that the closer cooperation which has begun to operate over the past year has already resulted in savings and, whilst the quantification of these savings is difficult, reports that these are significant entailing, in one instance, the redeployment of fourteen officials from reprographic work to other duties;

Arrangements with outside printers

3. Appreciates the efforts made by the Commission and by the Office for Official Publications to have flexible arrangements with outside printers so that printing work may be farmed out in the interests of economy;
4. Proposes in this regard that advantage be taken of up-to-date transmission techniques to enable the Official Journal to be printed in the capitals of the Member States;

Management techniques

5. Approves of the efforts being made to institute efficient, cost management so that coherent decisions are taken in accordance with sound procedures and businesslike techniques, in relation to skilled personnel, compatible equipment and publishing programmes;

Potential improvements in translation

6. Observes the potential for major improvements in the translation service, in particular to take account of the technological advances in this field, including the use of text-processors, automatic translation systems and computerisation generally, and expects that savings will result from the exploitation of these opportunities;

Technological change

7. Believes that recourse to electronic mail and the technological changes implied in the evolution of the "electronic office" will reduce typing costs, simplify reprographic procedures and lead to improved management of the institutions' publication and document requirements;
8. Considers, in this context, that the throughput of the Commission print-shop at Brussels could warrant the provision of photo-composition or laser based technology since this would result in a saving of 53% in paper consumption, eliminate three printing tasks and at the same time produce more readily-readable documents;

Follow-up to other suggestions for economies

9. Welcomes the positive follow-up given to Parliament's recommendations on mailing lists, stocks and the commercial distribution of publications and documents, which have led to savings in materials, officials' time, postage and storage costs and asks that this economy drive be continued;

Conservation of paper

10. Will itself endeavour to use an increasing proportion of recycled paper;
11. Urges all the institutions, once again, to keep a constant watch for possible savings in this sector and to avoid wasteful use of paper;
12. Notes with pleasure that notices indicating cost per page for copies are displayed at each photocopying station;

As regards Parliament

13. Observes that, since Parliament's managements for printing and photocopying are separate, a recommended breakpoint between photocopying and printing should be established, remembering that the Commission's economic breakpoint is 20 copies;
14. Noting Parliament's special requirements for urgent short print-runs, considers that a pilot project of one - or at the most two - units should be set up using the new small all-in plate-making and printing machines;
15. Is concerned that Parliament's printing department in Luxembourg is spread over three buildings (Schuman, the New Chamber and Senningerberg), producing added overheads and difficulties for management, and recommends that consideration be given to the possibility of consolidating the three print shops within a single building;
16. Arising from the preceding paragraph, insists that the capacity of the under-utilised high-speed BMI rotary offset machine at Senningerberg should be made available to other institutions and the Office for Official Publications or the alternative of disposal should be considered;
17. Believes that the new internal cost-management procedures should make more feasible an inter-institutional and group charging system;

18. Estimates that a significant reduction in wasteful distribution of documents could be made if Members were to be invited to indicate the dates after which Committee and sessional documents should not be dispatched to their addresses in Member States;

19. Asks that consideration be given to the possibility of exchanging staff between Parliament's printing service and the Office for Official Publications in the interests of professional training, development of skills and mobility of staff;

Continue to supervise

20. Expects that, in the light of its special report¹, the Court of Auditors will continue to supervise this sector of activity reporting further at a later date if it deems such a course to be necessary;

21. Instructs its President to transmit this resolution and the report of its committee to the Commission, the Council and the Court of Auditor ;

¹ OJ no. C150, 19.6.1981

B

Explanatory Statement

1. On 14 October 1982, Parliament adopted the interim resolution of the Committee on Budgetary Control on the budgetary control aspects of the publishing, printing and reproduction practices of the EC.¹ For ease of reference, the text of this resolution is attached.²

2. The reasons for this interim report were:

- the presentation by the Court of Auditors of a special report on this sector of activity of the institutions of the EC which indicated that a number of problems existed which run counter to effective management;
- the concern of the Committee on Budgetary Control to ensure that the best possible use is made of taxpayers' funds in every sphere; and
- the apparent need for closer harmonisation of effort by all the institutions so as to avoid duplication of equipment and personnel in the printing and reproduction sectors.

3. In 1982, the outlay involved in this area of activity was of the order of 70 MECUs. Some 600 persons were engaged in the various operations concerned and some 2000million pages were consumed annually. Moreover, a considerable number of machines of various designs, capacities, and degrees of efficiency was being used. Hence, the sector warranted an effective political audit and control review.

Parliament's main preoccupations

4. Parliament urged in its resolution that there should be fuller inter-institutional cooperation, stricter measures in the conservation of paper, revision of stock levels, reduction in photocopying, computerisation and regular review of mailing lists, improvements in management techniques and regular provision of information to the Commission.

1 Doc 425/82

2 see Annex I

Follow-up by the institutions to Parliament's resolution

5. The follow-up by the institutions to the interim resolution referred to in paragraph 1 above, has been speedy, comprehensive and largely satisfactory. A report with documentation running to more than 200 pages was made available to the rapporteur who has held discussions with the officials concerned.

Main results

6. The following is a summary of the main results of the efforts of the institutions to take account of Parliament's wishes.

(a) The institutions carried out complex calculations to determine the viability of the two large printing shops - one at the Commission in Brussels and the other at the Publications Office in Luxembourg. The outcome reflects favourably on the printing shops of these two institutions.

(b) The Commission established that 80% of its total output of publications and documents is printed outside the institutions - a level which satisfies the call made by Parliament.

(c) Efforts were made to assess the savings that would result from the general introduction of text-processing in the institutions and of the ensuing economies in the volume of paper used.

(d) Henceforth, there will be systematic coordination of publication programmes at an inter-institutional level so as to prevent duplication, to rationalise expenditure and to enhance the political impact of these publications.

(e) Equipment programmes are also to be coordinated in a systematic manner so as to ensure that economies can be made and so that there can be a follow-up to the joint work on cost-benefit analysis.

(f) The tender procedure system has already been improved with an expansion of the register of printers and a better presentation of calls for bids.

(g) The institutions have agreed to make a joint effort to try to find private firms that are capable of meeting their needs for different production work required.

(h) The strengthened inter-institutional cooperation and the development of computerised systems are leading to a reduction in print runs and to improved stock control.

(j) The institutions are also following the recommendations of Parliament in regard to mailing lists and sales of publications and documents.

(k) Management accounting techniques are being improved and the institutions are taking steps to ensure that efficient management will operate throughout their operations and so that all concerned are made aware of the actual cost of their output.

(l) The introduction of new technology has gone beyond the study phase and is leading to improved cost-effectiveness in publishing and printing activities.

Closer integration

7. Above all, the institutions have agreed to accommodate inter-institutional integration of their publishing and reproduction facilities. This improved consultation and closer cooperation will make for the kind of economies that Parliament sought in its interim resolution.

8. The Committee on Budgetary Control welcomes (a) the savings that have resulted already (for instance, in the case of the Commission, there has been a reduction in staff of 8% in the sector concerned, with the officials involved being redeployed to other work);
(b) the improvement of cooperation between the major print shops;
(c) the systematic coordination;
(d) the expansion of joint documentation; and
(e) the improved techniques for transmission of texts which should add to efficiency.

As regards calls for tender and recourse to outside printers

9. When calls for tender concerning publication are placed, the provisions of the Financial Regulation are respected. The choice of tenderer is made under the control of the advisory committee on procurement and contracts of the institutions concerned. In the case of the large orders, calls for tender are advertised in the Official Journal. So that an equal chance is given to printers furthest away, certain costs, notably transport costs, are excluded from the calculations for preparing offers;

thus, orders can be allocated throughout the Community, solely on the basis of the firms' quotation. The Office for Official Publications endeavours to keep distance-related costs down by using new technologies wherever possible.

10. The institutions are studying how to improve further the present systems and, in particular, how to prevent too great a proportion of output being centred on only a few printers in certain Member States. Moreover, the institutions are studying ways to overcome the technology constraints that require publications to be printed at works close to the editorial teams.

11. Further steps are being carried out with a view to facilitating access to the Office for Official Publications' calls for tender. Moreover, an information campaign was launched last year amongst the main printing federations and their members. Contacts through the 'Group of Federations of Graphics Industries in the EC' - EUROGRAF - have increased the awareness of Community printing contracts amongst interested parties in the Member States.

12. More than 320 printers have already contacted the Office for Official Publications. The Office has included these on the computerised register of suppliers which is used in its calls for tender. Printers are selected automatically from the register according to their technological capacity, so that work offered is in line with what the various firms can do.

The conservation of paper

13. Parliament's interim report pointed out that the quantity of paper used in the production of EC texts was the equivalent of 13,000 trees per year being consumed. It is now evident that the other institutions share Parliament's conservation worry; already 45% of the Commission's printing is on recycled paper. Further improvements will depend on technological advances being secured.

14. A greater reduction in paper consumed can be expected to result from a wider use of recto-verso reprographics and of micro-fiches together with electronic transmission and filing services. Reduction in the size of documents printed will also lead to further savings in paper.

Reducing photocopying

15. Among the steps being taken to reduce photocopying are the introduction of operator-controlled photocopying machines together with better inter-institutional cooperation in the distribution of working documents and the increased use of computers. It is interesting to note that, in 1981, the number of photocopies made by Parliament was equivalent to only 9% of the volume printed by offset.

16. Furthermore, with a view to conserving paper, the Bureau of the European Parliament decided, on 27 October 1982, to limit the length of Opinions and Minutes to 5 pages and that of Explanatory Statements to 25 pages.

Conclusions

17. The Committee on Budgetary Control notes with approval the comprehensive reactions of the various institutions to the preoccupations voiced by Parliament in its resolution of 14 October 1982. It is apparent that very worthwhile improvements have been brought about and that economies have been effected. Nevertheless, the reforms are of an on-going nature and need to be reviewed from time to time by the discharge authorities. Moreover, in the whole sphere of printing, a new technological revolution is taking place. This revolution will present new opportunities for effecting economies, for improving the capacity for inter-institutional cooperation, for streamlining the publication and reproduction work of the institutions of the EC, and for greater efficiency generally. At a later date, the Committee on Budgetary Control should return to reviewing the future progress in the matter. It is also desirable that the Court of Auditors should keep a continuing watch on this particular sphere of institutional activity because of the size of the budgetary appropriations involved.

Thursday, 14 October 1982

RESOLUTION

on the budgetary control aspects of the publishing, printing and reproduction practices of the institutions of the EC

The European Parliament,

- A. having regard to the special report of the Court of Auditors ⁽¹⁾,
- B. having regard to the interim report of the Committee on Budgetary Control (1-425/82),
- C. aware of the substantial outlay involved in the printing and publications activities of the institutions of the EC,
- D. appreciating the importance of publishing the Official Journal in good time, but seeing the need for an overall reappraisal in so far as publication work and printing generally is concerned,
- E. anxious to ensure that the best possible use is made of taxpayers' funds,
- F. conscious of the possibilities for effecting economies and noting that these could be, potentially, of the order of 20 million ECU (being 25 % of Community outlay in this area), and
- G. recognizing that the variety and volume of Community activity in the field of printing and publications presents an industrial policy opportunity to encourage innovative enterprise in the new technologies.

Need for fuller inter-institutional cooperation

- 1. Calls on all the institutions to cooperate fully in the sphere of printing, reproducing and publishing texts so as to secure economies in the use of equipment, personnel and appropriations;
- 2. Insists that, wherever possible, a joint inter-institutional approach be adopted so as to minimize costs and to avoid duplication of plant and equipment;

Calls for tender and recourse to outside printers

- 3. Urges that greater recourse be had to calls for tender and to farming out to outside agencies which, as well as being far more economic, would be in harmony with the spirit of the Treaties;
- 4. Asks the institutions to reserve no more than 25 % of their output for internal printing and calls on the institutions to revise jointly the operations of the various workshops, including that of the Office for Official Publications, with a view to securing a higher degree of overall efficiency;

Conservation of paper and reduction of stock levels

- 5. Regards the quantity of paper — some 2 000 million pages, equivalent to about 13 000 trees — used in the production of EC texts — as excessive and asks that restraint be exercised in this area, so as to conserve this resource and to reduce demand for storage space, by keeping the numbers of copies of texts to the essential minimum and by ensuring that stock held are no more than are adequate for EC needs and that unnecessary stocks are recycled;

Hopes that the consumption of paper will be kept to a minimum and that, with this in view, consideration will be given to the possibility of providing each Member of Parliament with access to a computer terminal, allowing him to consult documents and then to select only those which he requires;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 150, 19. 6. 1981.

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Reduction in photocopying

6. Recalls that the Commission advises that, when more than 20 copies are being reproduced, offset printing is more economical than photocopying, and, therefore, asks that recourse to photocopying be kept to a minimum aiming at a 10 % reduction in the amount of paper used in photocopying during the coming 12 months;

7. Calls on the institutions to review individually their use of photocopying facilities, taking into account the possibility of substituting fewer machines — which would be operator-controlled — in place of the proliferation of self-service machines;

Mailing lists

8. Considers that it is necessary (a) to develop a computerized system, (b) to prune existing mailing lists from the present excessive level of some 300 000 and (c) to set up a systematic method of regular review of such lists so as to economize on paper, despatchers' time and postal charges;

Sales

9. Asks that greater attention be paid to increasing sales of publications and documents, particularly as the marketability of such texts is often an indication (a) of their relevance and (b) of the justification for their publication;

Improved technology and modern management

10. Calls for the application of modern management techniques to this whole sector of EC activity and urges that decisions be taken on the basis of appropriate costing, stock records and comprehensive data with special attention being given to cost awareness, value for money and a joint overall inter-institutional approach;

11. Urges, in this context, that authors of documents be made aware of the costs of publication of their texts;

12. Requests the Bureau of Parliament to review its earlier considerations to restrict the length of motions for resolutions and explanatory statements;

13. Notes that the plurality of working places of Parliament gives rise to certain additional costs which could be reduced by better stock control and improved distribution systems;

Action to follow this report

14. Calls on the Commission (a) to report to Parliament, within six months on the action which it and the other institutions have taken in response to this report and (b) to indicate the savings which will result from the follow-up action initiated;

15. Requests the other institutions to provide the necessary information to the Commission to enable it to report by the due date;

16. Urges that no institution should take steps to acquire additional plant which would increase printing capacity before the Committee on Budgetary Control reports further to Parliament;

17. Recognizes that, because the translation process is responsible for delays between text approval and publication and for the high costs of Community publications, it is urgent that

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the institutions carry out an immediate review of the translation services taking account of technological improvements in this field;

18. Considers that the translation of the political groups' parliamentary work, which is an element essential to the members' activities, must be undertaken by the translation service of Parliament's Secretariat, and requests at the same time that the Secretariat should inform the Committee on Budgetary Control each year of the number of translations requested by each political group and by each individual member;

19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the report of its Committee to the other institutions of the EC.